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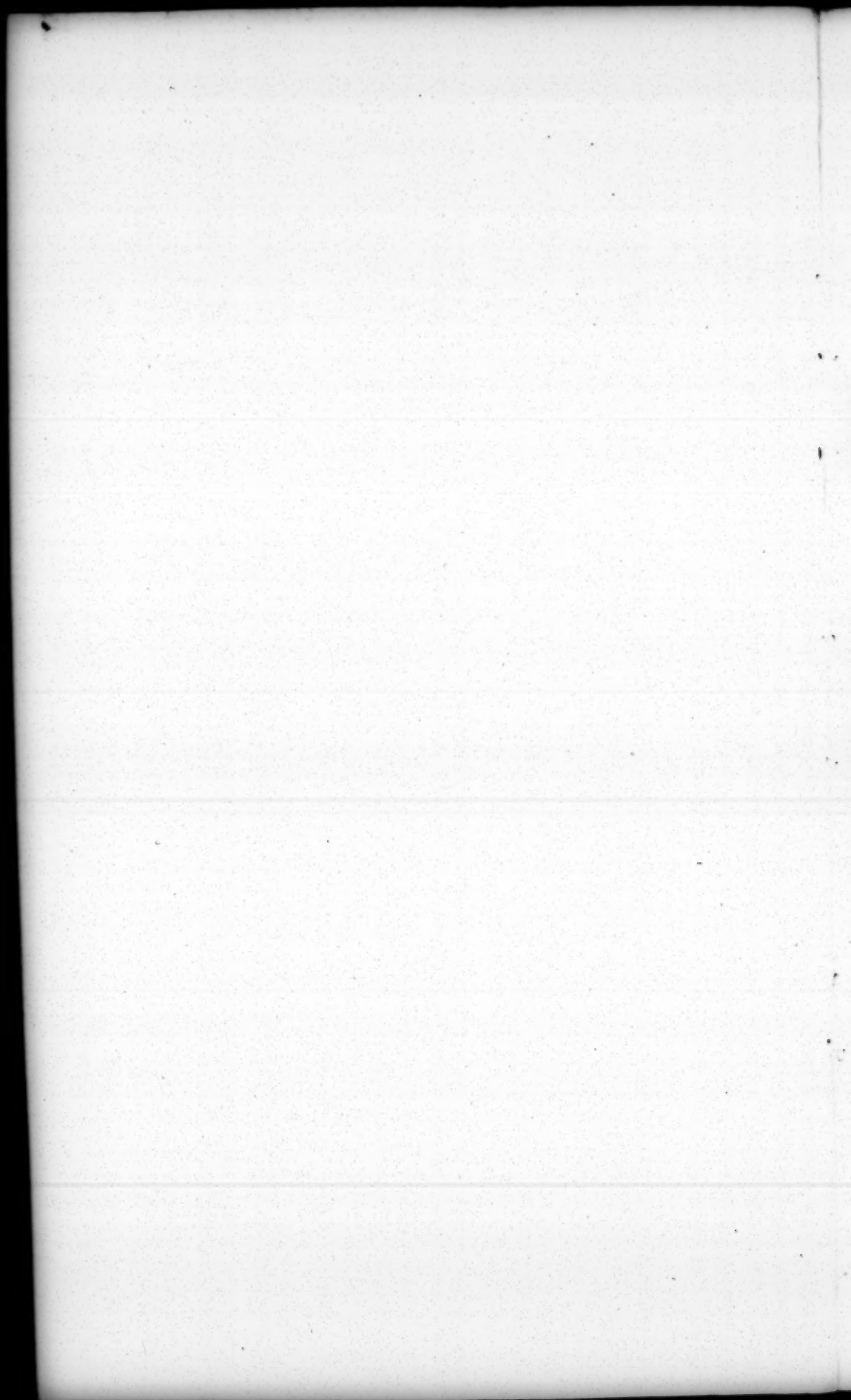
AN
ESSAY
Towards shewing the
REASONABLENESS
OF THE
DOCTRINE
Of the Holy and Undivided
TRINITY:
OR,
At least, the great *Reasonableness*
of *Believing* it.

Being a Letter occasionally written
By ERASMUS WARREN, Rector of
Worlington in Suffolk, to his Son.

Παρεχλῶ ἐν ἐκ' ἑῶν ἀλλ' ἡ ἀγάπη ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙ-
ΣΤΟΥ μὴ τῇ Χριστιανῇ τερπῇ χρῆται, ἀλλ' αἰσείας
δὲ βοτάνης ἀπὶ χρῆται ἥτις εἶναι αἰρεσις. Ignat. E-
pist. ad Trall.

Et Unitas irrationaliter collecta, Hæresin faciat; &
Trinitas rationaliter expensa, veritatem constituat.
Tertul. contr. Prax. Cap. 3.

L O N D O N,
Printed by J. H. for Henry Mortlock at the Phoenix
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1709.



THE
PRÆMONITION
TO THE
READER.

AS to the Publishing this Letter, amongst all Considerations perswading to it, this I found most strong and prevalent, when suggested, That as in Publick Calamities every Hand should contribute its Help towards the Common Safety, so when daring Errors assault known and important Truths, and Religion is threaten'd in its main Articles, every Pen should be ready to defend what's Orthodox, that being of great as well as general concern. What is here recommended is the best I could

The Præmonition, &c.

do that way in this Juncture ; may it prove but as useful, as my Intention in Writing and Printing it was sincere.

The Subject is High, the Highest in the World ; but the Reader must not think it is here treated of according to its Sublimity. What I humbly offer is a meer Attempt, and a mean one too ; where things are just touch'd on, and tack'd together without accurate Order, or any nice Method : And yet the Paper may be thought agreeable to its self, as being not a Treatise, but only a Letter.

And how positively soever any things uncommon may here seem to be deliver'd, I would be thought no farther Dogmatical in them, than becomes a most modest Enquirer after Truth, and as real a Lover of it.

A N
E S S A Y
T O W A R D S

Shewing the Reasonableness of the
Doctrine of the Holy and Undi-
vided TRINITY, &c.

MT SON,

OUR Excellent Church, in the First
of her Thirty Nine Articles of Re-
ligion, asserts Two grand Truths.
That there is but One True GOD.
And that in the Unity of the GOD-HEAD
there be Three PERSONS of one Sub-
stance ; the FATHER, the SON, and
the HOLY GHOST.

Yet as certain and momentous as these
Truths are, BOTH, we know, have not on-
ly been doubted of, but flatly deny'd. And
what Numbers are there amongst us, that
now question and oppose them ?

But that which farther concerns me is,
That I have lately been tax'd with inclining
to these Men, and as a Co-partner with them,
have not believ'd and adher'd to the esta-
blish'd

blish'd Doctrine of a TRINITY in UNITY. Which when I heard, my fear was, that they (or some other) might tell you as much as was told me before; and so the unhappy Rumour might make you uneasie, and some way or other turn to your Prejudice. To assure you therefore that the Report of me is false, and that there's no just ground or occasion for it; I send you this Letter.

It is grounded upon the mention'd *Article* of our Church. As to *Atheists* (who oppose the first Branch of it) you cannot see them better confuted than in the excellent Sermons that have been preach'd at the Lecture founded by the Honourable Mr. Boyle: Amongst which, those of the Reverend and Learned Mr. Clark are of special note. And surely it was a Providence very propitious, which set up this Lecture to so glorious an end as vanquishing *Atheism*; when 'tis like to answer it with such blessed Success.

But the *Point* here to be clear'd up, is contain'd in the *Second Branch* of the Article; which teaches, That *in the one Substance of the GOD-HEAD, there are Three PERSONS, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, equal in Power and Eternity.* A most sublime and sacred Truth: But as there's nothing so high which bold and busie Presumption cannot reach; so there's nothing so holy that vain and giddy Misperwasion will not venture to violate, or offer to corrupt: And here we have a sad Instance of as much. For many,
milled

missed by erroneous Minds, and a wretchedly mistaken Judgment of things, labour to pervert and so to explode even this Doctrine of the adorable TRINITY. A most daring and dangerous Error; for it strikes at the Root of Reveal'd Religion, and attempts to undermine and quite overthrow the Christian Faith, in one of its chiefest Fundamentals. And this Subversion they endeavour to make, by asserting there's but *one* PERSON in the GOD-HEAD; and therefore are called *Unitarians*: Or if they grant there are *Three* in it, they will by no means allow them to be *one* in Substance, or of the *same* in Essence.

The principal Ground upon which they build their Inorthodox Opinion is, *That the Doctrine of a TRINITY is contrary to Reason.* To take away which in some measure, I shall endeavour to shew, that a TRINITY, in Essential UNITY, is so far from being *against* REASON, that 'tis rather as *agreeable to it*, as a Thing of that lofty nature can be. Or at least that 'tis *reasonable* we should believe there *is* such a TRINITY. And here to proceed with the clearer method, I shall begin the Argument low, that so it may rise up by degrees to the Proof of the important Truth it aims at.

In the most inert and drossy lump of *Matter*, we may plainly see three things; Length, Breadth, and Thickness. But these are only three *Dimensions*, or ways of Extension in one *Body*.

If we look higher, to an Humane Spirit, we may there find three other things; *Understanding, Will, and Memory*: But these are only three *Faculties*, or Powers of Operation in one *Soul*.

If we mark these two *Substances, Spirit and Matter* united in *our selves*; we may there observe three *Persons, Peter, James, and John*, in one *Nature*. But *they* don't truly represent those in the Undivided TRINITY: For they are Persons *essentially* separate or distinct, and so three several Men: to which were the PERSONS of the Holy TRINITY exactly parallel, they must be three distinct GODS; and to affirm that would be direct *Tritheism*.

And that there must be vast difference *essentially* between the three *Divine and Humane Persons*; is demonstrable thus. Let *Peter and James* be both annihilated, and so the Humane Essence in them destroy'd; yet *John's* would still remain. But (with reverence) if we suppose the Divine *Essence* annihilated in the FATHER and the SON; by its being so, that of the HOLY GHOST must be actually abolisht. For there is but one Essence common to all the Three, and therefore should *that* fail in the *First, and Second*; it could by no means hold in the *Third*, as being that Essence which in the two former is already perisht.

Let us therefore take one Step higher, and go up to the *Angelical Order*; and there, instead of *Peter, James, and John*; we may
consider

consider *Michael*, *Gabriel*, and *Raphael*. Whom we'll suppose to be of that Rank of SPIRITS which the *Platonists* call *Nées*, or *Εννίδες*, *Minds*, or *Unities*; as being naked of Matter, or quite free from all Corpority. And then allowing *Penetrability* to be of the Nature of a spirit, we may suppose these Three run into one another. And thus we have a pretty lively Representation of the Blessed TRINITY. For here are three distinct Persons of one Substance, and more *one in Union*, than any distinct *Material* thing can be. For where Union of *Bodies* is never so compact, 'tis made only by cohesion of Parts, from the closeness of which results *Continuity* in some Cases, and in others *Consolidation* also. But here's a Union not by bare Contiguity, or superficial contact and conjunction of Parts; but by penetration of very Substances, the Substances of these Angelick Persons throughly piercing one another, and producing an Union deep and intimate.

Now as in reason we may suppose those *three* to be thus *one*; there being nothing in the Supposition but what's congruous to their Nature: so let us but think that the PERSONS in the TRINITY by their Περὶ ἑαυτῶν, or mutual *Pervasion* (which the Fathers call *Complexion*, and the Schools, *Immanency* and *Circumincession*) penetrate each other (as they are said to do;) and then tho' they are *Three*, they may still be *One*. Only whereas the Union

nion of those Angels can be but *fiſtious*; in the PERSONS of the Divine TRIAD it is *Natural*.

And thus thro' the Glaſs of Similitude we may competently ſee the TRINITY exhibited; for let us but apprehend the three Angels inſtanc'd in, to be *effentially* one, as they are ſo *penetratively*; and we ſhall then have a meet Conception, or fair Idea of a TRINITY in UNITY, even from a *rational* account of it in way of Likeneſs. And when in *Creatures* we find ſo near an Image or Type of it, why may it not be real and perfect in GOD? and why ſhould not the Almighty Maker of all things be glorious in that Archetypal Perfection, which has been ſhadow'd out by the alledg'd Compariſon, as within one ſtroke of a true Reſemblance? For let the Union of thoſe Angels be *real*, which has been put as *imaginary*; and the Representation is exact.

And tho' it be wonderful, that a TRINITY of PERSONS in an UNITY of Substance ſhould be *natural* to the DEITY; yet by all ſerious and good Chriſtians it has been conſtantly approved. And why ſhould they diſallow a Trinity of PERSONS in an Unity of Eſſence, when GOD has ſo competently reveal'd it is?

As to *Persons*, the *Hebrews* call them פנים *Faces*; to which answers προσωπα, with the *Greeks*; who likewiſe ſtile them υποστάσεις, and ὑφιστάμενα, *Subſtances*: and the *Latines* term

term them *Personæ*, as much as to say, *per se unæ*, things that are *single ones by themselves*.

If we look to the *Definition* or *Description* of a *Person*, it is said to be *rationalis naturæ individua substantia*; *the undivided Substance of a Rational Nature*. And tho' some may question whether this Description be not more accommodate to *Mens* Notion or Fancy of those PERSONS, than to *their* Nature or Quality; yet may we not even reasonably conclude, that there are *three* such PERSONS in the GOD-HEAD? For GOD being a Spirit, He must consist of a *Spiritual Substance*. And being infinitely perfect in all high Excellencies, *Reason* must be one of His great Perfections; and so His *Nature* must be *Rational*. And then supposing this Substance and Nature of His to have but one *way of subsisting* (as it is with other rational Beings, *Men* and *Angels* :) it could be no more than *one Person*, as every one of *those* are. But now GOD having certify'd us that He is **THREE** in one respect; and having describ'd these three by three *relative Titles*, **FATHER**, **SON**, and **HOLY GHOST**; and the first of these Titles, *Father*, necessarily implying that He *begets*; and the second, *Son*, implying as forcibly that He is *begotten*; and the third, *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit*, plainly implying, that He is *breathed forth*: Thus it is evident in reason that there must be three distinct *ways of subsisting* in the DEITY. And then why may not those Three, which result from the
Divine

Divine Substance thus diversify'd, be three *Persons*? For they sharing generally in the one common tho' undivided Substance, by their various *τρόποι ὑπαρξεως*, *Modes of Subsistence*, notify'd from Heaven, they may be so distinguish'd, as to be really *Personated*, tho' we apprehend not *how*.

The Learned *L. Valla* therefore was *much* to blame, where he reprov'd *Boëtius* (as Learned as Himself, and a noted assertor of the Orthodox Faith) for saying, *a Divine Person is an undivided Substance of the unchangeable Nature*. But much more when he declar'd, *we put Person in GOD*, quod vere in DEO triplex est qualitas: *because in GOD there is truly a Triple Quality*. And then adds, *Tales qualitates statuo in DEO, quæ ab eo abesse non possunt: I judge such Qualities to be in God, as He cannot be without*. A very unwarrantable as well as unusual way of speaking. For so he turns *Persons* into pure *Qualities*; *Substances*, that is, into meer *Accidents*: a monstrous and impossible Transmutation. And tho' in the Substance of the DEITY, by those *Modes* of subsisting, there are real *PERSONS*; yet that we should not understand how they become such, we need not wonder, when the *Modes* of all things are generally so obscure and inexplicable. And therefore notwithstanding that in the GOD-HEAD there are three *Persons*, yet as their having but *one Essence* makes them *Persons extraordinary*; so none knowing clearly how
that

that can be, at the same time that we count them *real*, we may call them *Mysterious* ones, and so they must be in a great measure. And they being but the Divine Essence distinguished into PERSONS by divers *Modes of Subsistence*, some may be ready to denominate them *Modal* PERSONS. Yet that Term which truly expresses their Quality will not at all diminish or detract from their Glory. For notwithstanding they exist in such a manner, they still retain their infinite Perfection. Nay, their *trinal Mode* of Vital Subsistence, as it is a peerless Excellency; so it is peculiar to the DEITY. And as the Threefold Life in Man sets him above all other visible Creatures; so by Triple Personality in His essential Unity, GOD more excels all Spiritual Beings.

If here it be objected, that the *Three* in the TRINITY are no where taught to be Three PERSONS of old; that is to say, neither in the *Bible*, nor in the *Apostles Creed*, nor in the *Clementine Constitutions*, nor in several of the first Christian *Fathers*; as *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenaeus*, *Theophilus Antiochenus*, and *Athenagoras*, to name no more; this silence seems to intimate there are no such things: I answer. While no Question was made, and no Controversies mov'd about the Holy TRIAD; no occasion was given to treat so explicitly of the PERSONS in it, or of them to speak distinctly. But when Objections were started, or rais'd against, and Men engag'd in Disputes concerning them; Writers then

then began to speak more plainly, as having indeed just cause to do it. Particularly, *Tertullian* call'd them *Persons* often. And when the DIVINITY of the SON of GOD was boldly attack'd, and blasphemously oppos'd by impudent *Arius* ; He was openly censur'd and deservedly condemn'd by the first General Council assembled at *Nice*. And in defiance of his Heretical Doctrine, the venerable Fathers of that famous Council drew up a Creed to vindicate and establish the important Article, which that Hæresiarch attempted to explode. And in that Creed JESUS CHRIST is acknowledged to be τὸ ὕψιον ἐκ τῆς Θεᾶς μονογενῆ, *the only begotten SON of GOD* ; τὸ ἐκ τῆς Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, *begotten of the FATHER before all Worlds* ; Θεὸν ἀληθινόν ἐκ Θεᾶς ἀληθινῆς, *True GOD of the true GOD* ; ἐκείνου τοῦ Πατρὸς, *of the same Substance with the FATHER*. All which put together and rightly weigh'd, will be of good force to prove His divine and glorious *Personality* ; however Men of unsettled Minds shall please to carp at, and except against it. And the same Creed asserts the DIVINITY of the HOLY GHOST.

If it be objected again, That GOD cannot make the bare Number *Three* to be *One* ; (for then He might as well make *three hundred*, or *three thousand* to be the same :) and how can He Himself then be actually *Three in One* ? I answer. GOD cannot make another GOD neither, but yet He is GOD nevertheless.
And

And (which shews the Objection improper, or less pertinent) *Three Persons* are not here said to be *One Person* (as 'tis objected *three Ones* can't be *One One*) but to arise by *Divine Modes* of subsisting in one **ESSENCE**.

Should the same Objectors urge, that 'tis *impossible* **GOD** should make *Himself Three in One* : I must answer. That which bounds or bars **GOD's** Efficiency, and makes things *impossible* to be done by Him, is said to be this ; that *doing them implies a Contradiction*. It implies (to speak plainly) that doing them is inconsistent with *Himself*, or with the *Creatures* : *Contrary to His Nature*, or to *Theirs* : and the thing is easily made out.

He cannot do *some things* as inconsistent with the *Nature of the Creature*. Thus, He cannot call *Yesterday* back again ; the nature of *Time* will not allow it. He can't make *Ten* to be as many as an *Hundred*, nor an *Hundred* to be equal to a *Thousand* ; it stands not with the nature of *Number*. He can't make a thing directly *progressive* and *retrograde* at once ; it is against the nature of *Motion*. He can't make *Noon-day* when and where it is *Midnight*, the nature of *Light* and *Darkness* admits not of it. So He can't make one of us to be *born* and *not born*, to be *alive* and *dead*, to be in *Rome*, and in *Jerusalem* at the same time ; it is incompatible to the nature of a *Man*. And for the same reason the *Doctrine of Transubstantiation* must needs be false ; Almighty Power being unable to make
the

the same Body present in thousands of places at once : or to be whole and broken, Bread and Flesh at the same time : the nature of a *Body* will not bear it. And truly when the Angel declar'd our LORD's Resurrection, he seems to have had respect to this ; and in asserting that Miracle to have remonstrated against this Absurdity ; the *possibility* of His Body's being in *two* places at once, which blasts the Notion of *Transubstantiation* : *He is not here, for He is risen*, S. Matt. 28. 6.

And then *other things* GOD cannot do as being *contrary to His own Nature*. He can't *deny His Word*, 'tis inconsistent with His *Veracity*. He can't be *Unjust*, 'tis unagreeable to His *Righteousness*. He can't be *Cruel*, or *Die*, 'tis contrary to His *Goodness*, and *Immortality* : Nor can He *act*, or *approve* of any thing that is *Sinful* ; as repugnant to his *Holiness*, or essential *Purity*.

Nor is it from any *defect* in His *Power* that He cannot do these things ; for he being the Centre of all Perfections, to make that perfect it must be *infinite* : but then the very *Transcendency* of that Attribute *incapacitates* Him to do what's *evil* in it self, or *diminishing* to His MAJESTY ; which if He could do, He must be *Impotent* and no longer ALMIGHTY. So *we* have power to do *evil*, but then 'tis attended with *Infirmity* in our Nature, and proceeds from *thence*.

But to come up closer to the Objection, GOD *made not* His own Being : and that He could

could not do it, is too plain and obvious to make out. It exists necessarily, independently, and so eternally in the fullest Sense. And consequently, what He is now for ESSENCE and PERSONS, the same He always was, and ever will be; not from the Efficiency of His Power, or the Energy of His Will; but from the Constitution of His Nature.

In case it be urged farther, that the All-wise GOD who made Men rational Creatures, in *reason* should *deal* with them as *such*, and not upon account of His *own* Nature impose things on them contrary to *theirs*; and even make them *Fools* in point of Religion, by obliging them to believe Three PERSONS in One ESSENCE, which is incomprehensible, and against Reason: I answer. The Ubiquity of GOD, His Eternity, *à parte ante*, and His Omniscience, are Excellencies incomprehensible yet we believe them: and why then shall we not as well believe Him *Three in One*, tho' we comprehend not that neither? For tho' GOD's being *Three in One*, is not so much in the Idea of His Nature as other glorious Perfections are; yet He having reveal'd it so clearly to us, we have cause sufficient to make it an Article of our Faith without sticking at it, it being not *against* Reason, but *above* it only. A Distinction so far from Emptiness and Levity, that 'tis very significant; the two Branches of it point at things as different as *Mystery*, and *Non-sense*.

And the better to illustrate the Reasonableness

sonableness of the Doctrine of the TRINITY, I lay down these Seven following *Lemmata*, or *Positions*. Tho' I do not say positively they will lead to an easier Notion of the TRINITY, or to a clearer Explication of it; to both which I could heartily wish they might minister effectually.

1st, *It is very reasonable that every Being should have its Properties.* There are no Entities without Attributes, or special Adjuncts belonging to them. Where are none of these, there can be nothing at all; according to that known Axiom, *Nihili nullæ sunt affectiones.*

2^{ly}, *The Properties of a Being are still answerable to itself.* The nobler *That* is, the nobler are *They*. Nor can it be otherwise, they depending upon, and flowing from its very Nature. And so a Body must have bodily Affections, and a Spirit spiritual ones. And this second Thesis is as clear and true as the first.

3^{ly}, *Noblest Beings having naturally noblest Properties; if there be one Being superlatively better than all other, in reason THAT must have transcendent Excellencies in it.*

4^{ly}, *GOD infinitely surpassing the noblest Beings, in reason He must have the noblest Excellencies in infinite perfection.*

5^{ly}, *Where all infinite Perfections dwell, in reason there must be an infinite Fulness or Perfection of Life; that being the highest Perfection of all, without which no other can be enjoy'd.*

6^{ly}, *Where*

6ly, Where there is infinite Plenitude or Perfection of Life, that Vital Power *in reason must be Unmeasurable in Height or Greatness*; Infinity being but boundless Immenfity. And *in reason also it must multiply into VITALITIES within itself, according to its utmost capacity of doing it, if that be a Perfection or noble Property of Divine Life in the DEITY*; which who can fay it is not? And that it *really* is fo, we have this reason to think. Because fo as to the peerless Excellency of LIFE, there would be fomewhat peculiarly wonderful and transcendently glorious in GOD, beyond what is or can be found in any Creature. And as 'tis highly reasonable that the Principle of Life in *Him* should be infinitely above that in *other* Beings, and expand itfelf accordingly: fo how can it *be, or do* this more admirably than *thus*? Namely, while His fingle Effence by a matchlefs and miraculous Superfætation of Life, flourifhes mysterioufly within itfelf into Three Divine VITALITIES. And yet it may be as *reasonable* for the GOD-HEAD to flourifh into Three Infinite *Vitalities*, as for a *Body* to fhoot out into three *Dimensions*: because it may be as *natural* for the Infinite DIVINITY to do the *one*, as for a Corporeal Finite Substance to do the *other*.

Laftly, Thefe Three VITALITIES *springing up in the fame Effence, 'tis reasonable they fhould be but one GOD, and utterly impoffible they fhould be more.* Yet they being diftinct in

themselves, tho' one with that Essence; in reason they must constitute three several *Vitalities*. And yet in the DEITY there may be but three, for a like reason that *Dimensions* in a Body are no more. For as the whole of Quantity dilates itself entirely in a threefold Extension, beyond which there are no other natural quantitative Modes or Measures; so the Fæcundity of Life in the Divine Essence *spends* itself fully, in a marvellous Efflorescence into a triple *Vitality*. And that being adequate to its vital Pregnancy, and sufficient for it to display the whole of its Autozoick Energy in, it can advance no farther by Multiplication into more such *Vitalities*.

But then the *first* of these having its Eternal Being from *Itself*, and the *Second* from *That*, and the *Third* from *Both*; this in reason again must be a ground of some *Subordination* amongst, as well as *Distinction* between them. So far at least, as that the FATHER should in *order* be before the SON, and the SON before the HOLY SPIRIT.

A *Shadow* of this, if not something more, we have in our selves. For as every one has *Humanity* compleat in his own Nature, so he has it in a *threefold* Life; *Rational*, *Sensitive*, and *Vegetative*. Only these *three* being but different *Degrees* of Life in every of us, there is still but one *single Person* in each under a triple vital Consideration: Yet in these Degrees of Life, there is as great difference,

as

as there is between the Life of Plants, and the Life of Beasts; or between the Life of Brutes, and that of Men: tho' we find them all complicated in *us*. And how far such low gradual Vitalities in *us*, may typifie the infinitely higher, distinct and equal one in GOD; I leave it to the Ingenious first to try, and then to judge. And particularly they may consider, whether *the Rational Life* in us does not *contribute* to the *Sensitive*; and if the *Vegetative* be not *derived* from *those two*: for then they'll the better resemble and represent the glorious *Vitalities* in the GOD-HEAD, and so may let Men into the clearer knowledge, and easier and firmer belief of the same.

It may also be consider'd very seriously, whether these VITALITIES (tho' not absolute PERSONS) may not yet as well accomplish the great Ends of Providence, by carrying on its various Dispensations; and promoting the high Interests of GOD and His Church: as if they were real PERSONS. For what can be more active than Life? more powerful than Almighty Life? more wise, merciful, humble, patient, passive, and affectionate, than Life that is infinitely good, meek, and even *Love* itself, as GOD is? And so, in short, why might not the Second VITALITY in the TRIAD, which truly is the SON of GOD, BE as sufficiently, and as effectually DO, and SUFFER, all that the Second PERSON of it is said to have *been*, and *done*, and *suffer'd* for Mankind? Which

granted, all Controversie about PERSONS in the TRINITY may cease; and we shall have nothing to do but to acknowledge, confess, believe in, adore, love, and obey the Divine VITALITIES, as we us'd to do the Divine PERSONS.

Should any suggest, that these VITALITIES being not PERSONS, if *one* of them were united to Humane Nature to endure Hardships, the other *two* must *suffer* with that, because they are not *personally* distinct: I answer. *Even in our selves we find that need not be.* For tho' we have but three different *Degrees* of Life in us, yet when *one* suffers deeply, the other *two* may be wholly free and unconcern'd. Thus, our Minds may be clear, and our *Reason* entire; our *Bodies* also may be sound and strong, and increase or grow; when our *Senses* are disorder'd or much afflicted. And if *we* may suffer in our *second* Degree of Life, and the *two* other not be affected; how much more might the Second VITALITY in the GOD-HEAD upon union with Humanity, be *subject to sufferings* according to its Capacity; while *both* the other rest in Immunity from them.

Yet if in the Judgment of the Wisest and Best, the THREE in the DEITY must still be PERSONS; the VITALITIES mention'd interfere not with their Existence. They rather conduce to our believing there are PERSONS, and may help us to frame the clearer Conceptions or Ideas of them. And upon
that

that account I would be thought to remember them here. And truly they subsisting singly by themselves, and being one with the Divine Essence; in reason they must constitute several *Hypostases*: *Vital* ones at least, if not *Personal* ones. And that *Hypostases*, or *Subsistences*, are terms agreeable to the **THREE** in the **TRINITY**; is inferrible from **CHRIST**'s being called *Χαρακτηρ ὡμοεισως*, the *Print*, or *express Image* of **GOD**'s **SUBSISTENCE**, Heb. 1. 3. and so *Hypostasis* is a Scripture word. And then there being *Three* of these in the **DEITY**, they must be as different from Divine *Attributes* as *Vital Subsistences* are from Divine *Properties*.

Yet after all, tho' the *Three* in the **TRINITY** may be *Hypostases*; if they be **PERSONS** too (to speak plainly) they must be so *another way*, or after *another manner* than we are. For tho' our Persons have every one an entire *Essence* proper to himself (wherein strict common Personality seems very much to consist;) the **PERSONS** in the **GOD-HEAD** have but *one Essence* common to them *all*. And from hence springs the great difficulty of apprehending the Divine Personalities, in that their Essential Unity obscures that Distinction of Singularity, in ordinary Persons so very manifest. And so between *them* and *us* there is this Difference; that they are **PERSONS** by different *Modes* of Subsisting, and we by virtue of particular *Essences* appropriate to our respective Beings; and conse-

quently, their Personalities must be *mysterious*, as has been said. So that were three *Vitalities* in the TRINITY every way as agreeable as three PERSONS; they might so far be owned rather than *Persons*, as they would be more *intelligible* than *they*. For three *Vitalities* need differ but *gradually*; whereas three *Persons* measur'd by our selves must differ *essentially*; which we can't understand *how* those in the TRINITY should do: where three gradual *Vitalities* are more conceivable. Yet because our Church counts them PERSONS, so do I; tho' I call them VITALITIES, because the Sacred Book intimates they are such. And therefore none should think the *Term* VITALITIES apply'd to the Holy Three in the TRINITY, at all *improper*. It is really so far more authentick than PERSONS; as it is found almost expressly in Scripture, where the *other* is not.

Thus the FATHER is said to have *LIFE* in Himself, S. *Joh.* 5. 26. And most truly, as being the Fountain of it. And accordingly *with Him* is said to be מְקוֹר חַיִּים *The Fountain of Lives*, Psal. 36. 9. And no wonder, when by being the Fountain of the DEITY, He must be the Fountain not only of the most Sublime, but even of *Infinite* Lives.

The SON proclaims Himself to be *the LIFE*, S. *Joh.* 14. 6. But then He declaring at the same time, and in the same Verse, that He is *the Way*, and *the Truth* too; what He utter'd may be lookt upon as spoken *figuratively*:
and

and S. *Austin* taking it to be so, glosseth upon it thus. He is *Via*, in exemplo, *the Way*, in *His Example*; *Veritas*, in doctrina, *the Truth*, in *His Doctrine*; and *Vita*, in præmio, *the Life*, in *His Reward*. Yet if we look farther, we shall plainly see that He *certainly* is *LIFE*, as he proclaims Himself: For He says, *I am the LIFE*, S. *Job.* 11. 25. And He's said to be *the Prince of LIFE*, *Act.* 3. 15. And *CHRIST* our *LIFE*, *Col.* 3. 4. And *the LOGOS* of *LIFE*, 1 S. *Job.* 1. 1. And *that eternal LIFE* which was with the *FATHER*, and was manifested unto us, v. 2 And *Eternal LIFE*, *Chap.* 5. 20. And to close up all with the Note of a Learned Writer, *Peculiare est ubiq; Johanni per vitam æternam CHRISTUM significare: It is peculiar to John every where to signifie CHRIST by Eternal Life.*

And then as to the *HOLY GHOST*, He is pronounced *the SPIRIT of LIFE*, *Rom.* 8. 2. And when instead of *Living*, they are thus said to be *Life* in the Abstract; they may well be stil'd *VITALITIES*, both with good reason, and special Emphasis.

Yet here I must remark, That the *SON* hath His *VITALITY* from the *FATHER*; and therefore He says, *I live by the FATHER*, S. *Job.* 6. 57. And the *HOLY GHOST* has His from Both the *FATHER* and the *SON*; and therefore the *FATHER* does not only own Him for *His SPIRIT*, *Rom.* 8. 11. but also declares Him, *the SPIRIT of His SON*, *Gal.* 4. 6.

Not

Not that the SON's deriving Life from the FATHER does at all diminish or alter the Nature, Degree, or Dignity of it. Even with *us* tho' the Son owes his Life to the Father; yet 'tis every whit as good as *His*. And CHRIST Himself makes His Life *equal* to the FATHER's, S *Joh. 5. 26.* *As the FATHER hath Life in Himself, so hath He given to the SON to have Life in Himself.* The SON therefore has not only Life *from* the FATHER, but He has it *in Himself* as fully as the FATHER has it: Life in Him is as divine and adorable as in His FATHER.

Lightfoot,
Hor. Heb.

And therefore our LORD's words, as a Learned Man observes, are but a *Periphrasis* of the Name JEHOVAH. But then the Circumlocution respecting the SON as much as the FATHER, That Name must be as agreeable to the *one* as to the *other*. And so the Life of the SON must be as perfect (according to the import of the *Tetragrammaton*) as the FATHER's own Life is; even as derivative Life from Him, in way of Eternal Generation can possibly be. And then the same must be as true of the HOLY GHOST, by virtue of His eternal *Procession* from Both.

The same words also are a clear proof of *Two* VITALITIES in the GOD-HEAD. For they assure us, there is a FATHER, and a SON; and that the latter has Life as compleat *in*, and as proper *to* Himself, as the former. And when there are *two* such in the DEITY, why may there not be *three*?

And

And thus those words give farther Grounds, and more Countenance still to the Term and Notion of Divine VITALITIES. For the FATHER having Life *in Himself*, and the SON having Life *in Himself*, and both having it in Perfection, even in Infinity, and *from* and *to* all Eternity; what can they be but Two Infinite, Distinct VITALITIES? And then the HOLY GHOST in all reason may as well be a Third. And so in reason again, why may not the TRINITY in Unity consist of Three such VITALITIES; essentially One, infinitely perfect, and thus distinguished by *Modes* of Subsistency?

Indeed as for *Physical Modes* they are of no great use here, nor is there, nor can there be room for *many* of them. *Time*, for instance, can do nothing here, because these VITALITIES are Eternal; nor *Place*, because they are Spiritual; nor *Quantity*, because they are not extended; nor *Bounds*, because they are Illimited; nor *Change*, because they can't be altered; nor *Shape*, because they are not Figur'd; nor *Colour*, because they are not Complexion'd; nor *Mixture*, because they are not Compounded; nor *Parts*, because they are Immaterial; nor *Unlikeness*, because they are Similar; nor *Death*, because they are Immortal. Tho' from *Order*, *Number*, *Action*, *Distinction*, and *Relation*, there's no exempting the Essential VITALITY of the GOD-HEAD: Which by everlasting *Generation* being doubl'd into a *Second* by the *First*;

First; is trebl'd, or becomes a *Third*, by ineffable *Spiration*, or *Proceſſion* from *Both*.

Thus runs the moſt Reasonable Account I'm able to give of the Glorious TRINITY. The Summ is this.

1. In the GOD-HEAD there is an infinite Fulneſs of Energetick Life; and for that reaſon it is not only pregnant with vital *Properties* and *Perfections*; but moreover with perfect VITALITIES.

2. This Fulneſs of Life is ſufficiently exhausted or ſpent in a Triplication of itſelf into *Three* Infinite VITALITIES; and therefore in the DEITY there are no more.

3. Theſe Three being all naturally in the ſame Eſſence, and as naturally emerging from it; for that reaſon they can be but one GOD.

4. Yet the Second of theſe being from the *First*, and the *Third* from them *Two*; they muſt therefore be diſtinct, and one in order before another: as there is good reaſon why they ſhould.

5. Tho' all having but one Eſſence, they muſt needs be *Co-eternal* in Exiſtence, *Co-equal* in Glory, and *Co-partners* in all natural Perfections. Only the FATHER alone is Self-originated as to His own VITALITY, and the Source of Origination to the SON; as *Both* of them are to the HOLY GHOST. Where is there any thing *unreaſonable* in this?

As to that Hypotheſis of a learned and good Writer (in other Caſes) which founds the

the Distinction of the Divine PERSONS in a *Self-consciousness* ; it is by no means to be allowed. For then the two *Natures* in CHRIST would be two *Persons*, each of them having a *peculiar Consciousness* to itself. And so the Merit of our LORD's Sufferings would sink immediately or be utterly destroy'd ; the Value and Efficacy of the Sufferings of His Humanity springing up from its *Personal Union* with His DIVINITY. And tho' I do not think the good Man inclin'd to such an Error, yet his Notion leads unhappily that way.

Dr. Sherlock, late
D. of
Paul's.

But here farther to help our Conceptions a little, and make us the more apprehensive, it will not be amiss to represent the TRINITY, and endeavour to illustrate it by one proper *Similitude*, the *Sun*. For so fitly does he resemble the DEITY, that GOD is pleas'd to compare Himself to Him, *Psal. 84. 11.* *The LORD GOD is a SUN.* And well might he make the Sun an Emblem of Himself, as being the exactest Image of Him that this Material World has. For whether we look to GOD's Essential UNITY, or else to the Three VITALITIES in It ; it exhibits them fairly in a decent Analogy, so far as a Shadow can shew such Infinite and Substantial Glories.

Thus the Sun is a most pure and noble *Substance*, consisting of the finest and subtilest Matter that we know. And GOD is the divinest, and most exalted *Essence*, even the sublimest Spirit that can be.

In

In the Substance of the Sun there are *three different remarkable Modifications*; Motion, Heat, and Light. And in the Essence of GOD there are Three distinct VITALITIES, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; which are but that Essence diversify'd by peculiar *Modes* of Existence.

In the Sun, Motion begets Heat; and from those two rises Light. And in the GOD-HEAD, the FATHER begets the SON, and from them Both proceeds the HOLY GHOST.

In the Sun, Motion is not Heat; nor is either of them Light. And in the GOD-HEAD, the FATHER is not the SON, nor is either of them the HOLY GHOST.

In the Sun, the *first* Modification Motion (which is vehement in such a Mass of so very fine Matter) produceth the *second*, which is Heat; for most subtil Matter vehemently moved, becomes inflamed: and then those *two* send forth Light, which is the *third*; for subtil Matter violently moved and inflamed turns luminous. And the reason why these Modifications stop here, is because the finest Matter wants feracity, or productive force to carry them on farther. So in the GOD-HEAD, the FATHER begets the SON, and They jointly breath forth the HOLY GHOST. But because the DIVINITY's Fruitfulness ends there, and it can no farther propagate Hypostatical VITALITIES; therefore in those *Three* they have their Complement and ultimate Termination; not one more can be superadded.

superadded. The FATHER subsists by *Self-origination*; the SON by *Generation*; and the HOLY GHOST, by *Spiration*: but in the DEITY there can be no more multiplicative or prolifick Powers or Acts, and therefore no more VITALITIES neither. And is not all this *Reasonable*?

In case, at last, we don't *perfectly* understand the *way how* all this is done, yet thus it may be nevertheless. As we know but little of *Spirits* in general, so much less of That ADORABLE ONE in whose Nature is lodg'd this stupendous Mystery of an Undivided TRINITY; and it being folded up as in the Centre of an Infinite Glory, no wonder that we should not thoroughly apprehend it; tho' it certainly is so for all that.

'Tis no good Objection against the being of a Sea, that a Man can't hold it in the Hollow of his Hand: and 'tis no better Argument against a TRINITY, that by our narrow Reason we can't clearly conceive it. But as it could not be an immense Sea, if our Hand could inclose it; so neither could it be a Mysterious TRINITY, could our Reason comprehend it. And therefore we are not to stop here, but to go on farther. And truly if it be necessary, something more may be added yet, to vindicate the Doctrine of it from *Unreasonableness*, tho' our Reason reaches not to knowing it exactly: and I offer these following *Considerations*.

1st, Per-

1st, Perhaps Humane Reason at present is no competent Judge of a TRINITY.

2^{ly}, Our not understanding it now, argues not that its Doctrine is contrary to Reason, because it may be intelligible to us hereafter.

3^{ly}, If only GOD understands it, that secures it from being contrary to Reason.

4^{ly}, If our Reason cannot reach to know the Nature of the TRINITY, yet still 'tis reasonable we should believe it is; it being very reasonable we should not comprehend it, upon account of our natural Meanness and Shallowness.

First, Humane Reason at present may be no competent Judge of a TRINITY. And how can that Case be fairly try'd and determin'd which lies, coram non judice, before a Judge unmeet or insufficient? None can rightly decide what they cannot fully discern. As very fine and curious things may be in several Objects, which to the dim-sighted are not visible; so in sundry Doctrines there may be admirable Notions, tho' flat and dull Minds can't rise high enough to apprehend them. The true Case here.

Indeed without Reason we could never find out whether there be a TRINITY or no. For that is it which must note and gather up the Evidences on both sides, as well for us, as for the Unitarians. And when it has collected them, that's the Touch-stone which must try the Goodness, or the Balance which must shew the Weight of them respectively; and

and when it has carefully try'd or weigh'd them, must pronounce which of the two preponderates or excels. Thus far *Reason* is highly useful to bring us to *know* there is a TRINITY.

But then, if upon the Strength of Reason we advance farther, and examine *what this TRINITY is*, and go upon a *thorough Explanation of it*; our present Reason may fail here as wanting Force and Efficacy for the Work.

The Eye that sees there is a Sun, yet dazles to behold it; and be it never so quick and strong, can't pierce thro' it, or look to its Centre. And so it fares now with Humane Reason, when it fixes on the TRINITY with intention to discover it perfectly. Three such Glorious INFINITES in One, is an over-powering Theorem to it; and when it displays itself in its mighty Lustre, and strikes upon our Reason with its bright Vibrations, it's forc'd to shut its too weak Eye, or else to turn it another way.

'Tis one thing to see there is an Ocean; and another, to descry the *Bottom* of it. And tho' Reason may help us to know there is a TRINITY, it may yet be above its power to *explain* it. For alas, it falters in far meaner things, and shews itself purblind where we might think it should have sharpest Eye-sight.

We our selves are made half of Matter, and as one moiety of our Being consists of Body, so outwardly we converse with nothing save Bodies, and what relates to them. But tho' we

have Art, Observation, Study, and long Experience, as well as *Reason* to let us into acquaintance with them; yet we are so far from knowing their *Essences*, that we are ignorant of many of their common *Phænomena's*. What a number of Problems undeterminable, do *Time*, and *Place*, and *Quantity*, and *Motion*, and *Gravity*, and *Sounds*, and *Sympathies* afford? To say nothing of *Thunders*, *Winds*, and other *Meteors*; or of all the *Modes* of things at once that occur to *Notice* and *Contemplation*; which be they never so mean and trivial are of difficult Explication, and so dark and latent as to be inscrutable. And when Reason is so puzzl'd with *Bodies* and their *Physical* Qualities, Habitues, and Respects; how shall it attain to the perfect Understanding of Spirits, especially of the infinite Nature and VITALITIES of the GOD of them all? They who are unable to fly up to the Clouds, must never think of ascending to the Stars.

But we that are compounded *half* of *Body*, in our *other half* are immortal *Spirit*. Now let the acuteſt Maſters of Reason ſhew *what* that *Bond* of Union is, and *how* that vital *Knot* is ty'd, which holds theſe two Heterogeneous Principles ſo cloſe together. That they are actually faſt join'd, we all know; our ſelves are Evidences, by being Inſtances of it. But were we not convinc'd that 'tis *de facto* true, it might be as hard to be believed as a TRINITY in UNITY; and perhaps might ſeem as
contrary

contrary to Reason, as That does to Socinians.

For that Spirit and Flesh should dwell together in the union of Life, and combine with such Intimacy as to blend their Powers in joint performances, and mingle Activities in rational and corporeal Functions and Operations as they do; would seem so incredible and absurd, had we not been assured of it; that Philosophy would be ashamed and afraid to assert it, as not knowing well how to account for't. For did not common Experience warrant it, who dare venture to affirm that Notions can be ty'd up with ligaments of Flesh? or that Thoughts and Dust can grow up together in strict and living Coalescence? Such a Doctrine would be lookt on as monstrous Paradox, or ridiculous Whimsy; and the Teacher of it would rather pass for a *Phrantic* than a *Philosopher*. Yet our Constitution is of such a nature; for we are a strange Miscellany, or marvellous Compounds of Spirit and Flesh; and, as it were, Thought and Dust moulded up in regular Masses, or made into curious organical and living Frames. But then how the Composition begins and continues, and what knits such discordant things together and keeps them so clasp'd in vital Conjunction; will be hard to find. Best Reason's at a loss to declare it, and make it out to the satisfaction of serious Enquirers. And when Reason leaves us thus in the dark as to our sorry *Selves*, it may well be too weak to unfold the Doctrine of the Holy TRI-

NITY, considering the measures of it we here enjoy.

Secondly, Our not understanding it now, is no good proof that the Doctrine of a TRINITY is *unreasonable*; for *tho' our Reason in this Life apprehends it not, it may do it in the next*. In that higher State there's a better Light, and a clearer Light will make us happy in a larger Knowledge; and our Knowledge there may be so enlarg'd, as to render *all* the abstruse Points in our Religion, (and *this*, for one) intelligible.

When in a clear Night we look up to the Sky, what abundance of Stars do we there see? but a good Telescope shews abundance more, and better Glasses would make farther discoveries. The *Galaxie* which seems a Tract of languid Light, consists of the faint united Beams of many bright tho' remote Luminaries; which Men by the hinted Helps can discern, tho' to naked Eyes they are inconspicuous. And thus it may be with us in the Regions above, where our Reason shall be heighten'd, and our intellectual Opticks (as I may say) improv'd. For as in that World there will be no natural Night; so no such Ignorance, or *mental* Darkness neither, as we now complain of. The Dust of Mortality which here causes incurable Blindness, shall there be wip'd clean out of our Eyes for ever: and our Minds being rais'd to an higher pitch of Reason, and replenisht with a more masculine degree of it; we shall see, and apprehend

hend at a better Rate than now we can. And amongst other new Sight^s and rare delightful Apprehensions, which our clearer perspicacity in the glorious World will make us capable of; this may be the chief, *the REASONABLENESS of the Doctrine of the Sacred TRINITY.*

And therefore as it is not *against* Reason, so it may not be simply *above* it neither; but only above such *Measures* of it as we here possess. And when our present Reason is made more perfect, and that Perfection shall make it more penetrative; we shall be better able to look into Mysteries, and easily see to the Bottom of some Depths, of which we can now have but superficial views.

And that Humane Reason is very *improvable*, and may rise much higher in the future Life, is probable from hence; that *Mortals here are indu'd with different Degrees of it.* For 'tis obvious to note, how quick and sharp the Reason of *some* is, above that of *others*. And it being a kind of Maxim, *that all Souls are equal*; this Acuteness, or Superiority of Reason must proceed from the *Body*, or be occasion'd by it in some measure: and so where *that* is of the finest Crasis, or Temperament (its Blood and Spirits being most pure and defæcate, and so fitter Instruments for the Soul's use in intellectual Acts) there Reason will be most active and vigorous. But then when these earthly fleshly Bodies shall be chang'd into such as are Heavenly and

Spiritual; this must greatly advantage our Reason. For those Bodies being of a purer Consistency, and so being better suited to the Spirits that actuate them, and more exactly adapted to serve them particularly in the exercise of their *Rational* Faculties; this must heighten the Rational Power in us, and by adding to its Strength, make *that* more spritely, and so *us* more Sagacious and Intelligent. *Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known*; said S. Paul, 1 Cor. 13. 12. And who can tell the true and full meaning of that high Expression, and how vast and piercing our Science shall be in the glorious World? At least it imports that it shall be strangely enlarg'd, and that we shall clearly see and understand things *there*, which *here* are obscure and ænigmatical. Nay, the Apostle speaking of *Knowledge* a little before, says, that *when that which is PERFECT is come, then that which is in PART shall be done away*: Plainly intimating, that our *future* Knowledge will not only swallow up our *present*; but that it shall be PERFECT. Which granted, that we shall then know GOD more perfectly need not be question'd. And therefore upon the Text quoted, the Learned *Hammond* Paraphrases thus; we shall then *know GOD as truly, as we have been hitherto known of Him*.

Tho' should the Blessed TRINITY in UNITY surpass the reach of *our highest Reason*, as well in the *next Life* as in this; and surmount the loftiest *Angels Reason*, as well as *ours*: Yet, Thirdly,

Thirdly, If but GOD alone understands it, 'tis far from being contrary to Reason still. And then to oppose or reject it as such, would be wicked presumption; because so, we set GOD, in point of Rationality on the same Level with our selves, and conclude Him no more intelligent than we. For allow Him to be but our Superior here, as He is infinitely; and then things which to us are perplex and intricate, and seemingly inconsistent; may yet appear most reasonable to Him, and consequently must be so in themselves.

And that GOD has a clear Idea of This TRINITY in His Divine Intellect, is manifest not only from authentick *Intimations* of it, but from His positive *affirming* it to His Church. For in that System of inspired Doctrines which came directly from Himself, a TRINITY is not only fairly hinted or insinuated, but plainly asserted. And tho' in the *Old Testament* it be done *obscurely*, yet the *New* lays down such *Proofs* of the Article as are *perspicuous*, and ought to be evictive. For there such different *Titles* of Relation are given to the Three VITALITIES, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; and then such *Properties* are ascrib'd to them, and such great *Works* said to be done by them, and such mighty *things* deliver'd concerning them; as evidence to sober, judicious Christians, that they must be three distinct active Subsistences in one and the same Divine Essence. And good reason we have to believe this, when

the veracious GOD, whose *Word is true from everlasting*, has given us such fair Testimonies of it. And yet,

Lastly, I must here add ; That *admitting our Reason should never be able to understand the Mysterious TRINITY, or explain it ; yet since GOD has taught it, it must be very reasonable for us to believe it tho' we can't understand it ; and the more, because indeed it is but reasonable to think, that to us it should be unintelligible.* For let it be consider'd, I say, let it be well consider'd ; If it must not be as reasonable that an infinitely perfect Being should in its Essence, Life, and *ways* of Existence exceed the Comprehension of our shallow Understandings : as it is reasonable that the vast Ocean should not be contained in a Nut-shell. Yet may not the sorry Shell as soon receive all the Waters of the Sea, as our finite Understanding reach the infinite Perfections and Modes of the DEITY : there being far more proportion between a *Nut-shell* and the Sea, than between *Finites* and *Infinities* ? Which granted, what remains for us, but to be thoroughly *satisfy'd* with our *own* Nature which GOD has given us ; and *ravish'd* with sweet Admiration of *His* ? And the more for its being so surpassingly Excellent, as to be understood by none but HIMSELF.

Having gone thus far in *Defence*, and *Explication* of the Undivided TRINITY, or the REASONABLENESS of its Doctrine ; it will now be proper to offer some *Directions* that
may

may be useful. *Cautionary ones*, I mean, to keep us from being insnar'd by sly *Unitarians*, who would fain wind Men in to embrace and comply with their crooked Sentiments, and wrong Suggestions. And

1st, If *Socinians*, or others, would perswade not to acknowledge a TRINITY, and set home their Perswasion with this their main Argument, that *'tis contrary to Reason*; tell them boldly that *it is not so*. That 'tis not at all *against* Reason, but only *above* our present proportion of it in this Life. So many things seem to be against Reason to the *Young* and *Ignorant*, which when they come to be Old and Learned, they find quite otherwise. Now as the Old understand more than the Young, and the Learned more than the illiterate; so Saints understand more than Men, and Angels more than Saints, and GOD more than all: Yet if *He*, and none else, understands there is a TRINITY, it is as far from being against Reason, as Omniscience can be from Misunderstanding. And that He understands there is a TRINITY, is most certain, because He requires our Faith in It. And tell them farther, that if indeed we *never* understand it, it may be but highly *reasonable* we should not; upon account of the Sublimity and Incomprehensibleness of GOD's Nature and Attributes; and the Meanness and Straitness of our own: which may be of so contracted a Frame as not to be capable of thorough knowledge of Him, in our most perfect

perfect State. And yet we may be never the less happy at last. For were our Faculties larger, they could be but filled with Knowledge, and as it were run over; and so they must do now. And who can wish more than compleat Satisfaction? But to end this Particular in a word; if GOD's *Judgments be unsearchable*, and His providential Methods so wise and deep, as that *His Ways are past finding out*; as he signifies, *Rom. 11. 33*: how much more must his Infinite SELF be the same in His *Nature*, and *Modes* of existing? Can any of us measure *Eternity* which has neither Beginning nor End? Or can *Infinity* be comprehended by us which has no Bounds? Yet they both exist nevertheless. And so does GOD's Eternal BEING, and the Infinite VITALITIES in it; tho' we can't find out the Manner *How*.

2ly, Do they ask, *How we can believe what our Reason can't make out*? Answer; They themselves must do the same (if they be Christians) in other Cases. Then they must believe that the World was made out of nothing. That the *Messiah* was born of a pure Virgin. That Prophets foretold remote Contingencies with accurate certainty. That Men were translated alive into Heaven. And that the Bodies of the Dead shall rise again at last, after all the Changes and Dissipations they suffer. But can reason explain these and the like Difficulties; and give a satisfactory account how they *were* or *are* to be done?

If

If they reply, These are Works of GOD, and His *Power* is Infinite, and so can do any thing that is great. Then rejoin ; that GOD's *Essence* is infinite too, and an Infinite *Essence* can be any thing that is Great and Admirable, as well as an Infinite *Power* can do it. And as by virtue of his Infinite Perfection, there must be all noble Excellencies in GOD ; so there may be *Three in One*, and whatever consists with His Infinite Honour ; because it may be contain'd in His Infinite Nature.

3ly, Do they demand, *Why GOD would reveal a TRINITY to us when we can't understand it ?* Ask them again, Whether the same Question may not go as well upon *other Revelations ?* whether the tallest Socinian pretending to highest Reason, may not wade out of his Depth in searching out the Sense of some Scripture Texts ? And whether the Masters of most cultivate Reason can satisfactorily decide such controverted Points ; as tho' they contain Divine Truths, do yet continue so disputable amongst us and undetermin'd ?

And add, that GOD's *Essence* being peculiarly Glorious, it may well in some things be very Mysterious. And as 'tis an *Ornament to our Religion* to be enrich'd with so noble a Mystery ; so 'tis an *Honour to us* to be acquainted with it, tho' instead of comprehending we can only admire it. Yet if it surpasses our present Understanding, it is not the less proper Object of our Faith, tho' it so becomes more *exercising* to it. And as true Believers must live
by

by Faith, so when the Eye of *that* grows so dim, as in looking at a Mystery to trust too much to *Reason's* Spectacles; 'tis an ill Symptom of a decay'd Sight, if not of Blindness in Religion.

4ly, Do they suggest, That believing this Doctrine which exceeds our Understanding, *will give Countenance and Credit to that of Transubstantiation?* Let them know, that of *that* there's no fear nor danger. For here we have to do with *sublimest Mystery*, there with *ordinary Objects of common Sense*; such only as we can touch, and see, and taste, and smell. So that if our Senses be right, and they and their Objects fitly dispos'd towards one another; we *must* be competent Judges of them, and capable of pronouncing truly concerning them, what their Nature is, so far as it belongs to *Senses* to do it. And therefore for us to hold, that Bread and Wine in the Sacrament, after Consecration, are the natural Body and Blood of CHRIST; besides affronting our rational Faculties, would be to renounce our very Senses: and to proclaim in effect, that GOD has made us such pitiful Creatures, that we can't attain to the certain knowledge of most obvious things; not so much as to distinguish Humane *Flesh* from *Bread*.

So that between these two things there is vast and manifest difference: for in the *One* we consider what is *Spiritual* and *Mystical*, and it being divinely recommended to us, we may believe it without doing wrong to our Reason,

Reason, tho' we don't so perfectly understand it. In the *Other* we are concern'd with what's material and visible, tangible and tastable; and therefore we can't assent to what some teach and maintain here, without injuring GOD and our selves, by offering violence to those Senses which He gave us for Tests and Arbiters in such cases. And so we need not be jealous of the Consequence suggested, that believing a TRINITY would let in the Belief of *Transubstantiation*. There's no just ground for that Suspicion.

That we can't look thro' the flaming Globe above, whose radiant Brightness we are unable to bear; is no disparagement to the Organs of our Sight; they being not made to behold that Luminary by direct and fixt, much less with *penetrative* Intuition. But if at high Noon we could discern no Light, nor see the difference between a *Loaf of Bread*, and the *Body of a Man*: this would shamefully reflect upon our seeing Faculty, and grievously reproach that All-wise Being, who planted it in us for constant use. And then besides that it would pend hard upon GOD, and mightily derogate from his Wisdom and Goodness, to plant Senses in Men so subject to Delusion as to be useless to the great Ends they should serve: It would moreover be fatal to the *Christian Doctrine*. For grant that our Senses rightly exercis'd about their proper Objects duly circumstantiated, may be deceiv'd; and upon that Concession it will follow undeniably,

ably, that we can have no sure Proof of the *Truth* of our Religion, as having none for the *Miracles* whereby it was confirm'd: our Senses being unable competently to *discern* and *judge* of them, whether they were *real* Miracles or no.

5ly, Would they perswade, that where
 (c) Deur. 6. Scripture says, there is (c) *One GOD*, and
 4. Rom. 3. (d) *none besides Him*; it means there is but one
 30. Gal. 3. *PERSON in the DEITY*? Tell them plainly
 20. (d) Isai. that's a vain pretence, an unfair straining of
 44. 6, 8. the Scripture's Meaning, and a wild and rude
 ch. 45. 5, distortion of it. For where-ever it affirms
 21. GOD to be *One*, it only points at the *Unity* of His Essence, but not at all excludes the *TRINITY* of PERSONS. When it speaks of Him so in His *Essential* Capacity, it does no more deny Him to be *Three Personally*; than it denies Him to be *Severe*, or *Revengeful*, where it says He is *Love*: or than it bars *Justice* out of His Nature, where it proclaims Him *Merciful* and *Gracious*. Think no *Socinian* Comments therefore upon such Texts, to be so much as Shadows of Argument against a *TRINITY*. Where the *HOLY GHOST* so delivers Himself, His Words terminate in *GOD's Nature*, without taking notice of the *PERSONS* in it. So speaking of Mankind, He oft calls them *Souls*, overlooking their *Bodies*. And He frequently stiles *CHRIST*, the *Son of Man*, which hinders not His being the *Son of GOD*.

Or else where Scripture speaks of *One GOD*,

GOD, take its meaning according to *Tertullian's* acceptation; who upon *Isai. 45. 5.* *I am the LORD, and there is none beside me*; thus expresses himself. (e) *It does not deny there is a SON* (He might have added, *nor an HOLY GHOST*) *but that there is another GOD.* And therefore where the Scripture pronounceth GOD *One*; conclude it done in opposition to *False Ones*, but not to the Three PERSONS in the *True*.

(e) Non
Filiū ne-
gat, sed a-
liū DE-
UM. Lib.
advers.
Praxeam.

6ly, Do *Socinus's* Friends urge, that GOD made it the *First* of all His Precepts, *Thou shalt have no other GODS but me*: and that we must have as clear a Revelation of a TRINITY, and as positive and express a Mandate to believe it, before we insert it in the Articles of our Faith, or make it an Object of the same? Then give them to understand, 1st, That GOD, in that Commandment, did nothing to check or restrain them from believing or professing Him to be *Three* Hypostatically, as well as *One* Essentially, or in Substance. 2ly, That in believing or professing GOD to be so, they do no more violate the *First Commandment*; than they do the *Fourth*, by keeping the LORD's Day instead of the Sabbath. And if the Church's Practice and Tradition could make an innocent and useful *Alteration* in one Commandment; why not a true and just *Exposition* of another? And that the Church has Expounded the First Commandment requiring the Adoration of One GOD, to the Sense or Notion of a TRINITY; might

might be evidenc'd by a numerous induction of good Allegations, were there need of them, but indeed there is none. For, 3^{ly}, we are to be (f) baptiz'd in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST: and that being no less than to be devoted to worship each of them in particular; it implies them to be of a Divine Nature, to make them worthy of Adoration; and to be three real and distinct SUBSISTENCES, that they may be capable of accepting our Devotions, and rewarding them. And 4^{ly}, we are taught that they are Givers of Grace, and Heavenly Blessings, where we are exampl'd to pray for the same by others doing it. Particularly (g) S. Paul prays for Grace and Peace to the Corinthians, from GOD the FATHER, and from the LORD JESUS CHRIST. (h) And that the Grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the Love of GOD, and the Communion of the HOLY GHOST, might be with them all. And so their hearing Prayers, and answering with dispensing the implored Favours, shews again that They are several Divine VITALITIES, and that for a TRINITY we have plain Revelation.

(f) S. Mat.
28. 19.

(g) 2 Cor.
1. 2.

(h) 2 Cor.
13. ult.

7^{ly}, Do Socinus and his Followers insinuate, that owning a TRINITY makes way for Idolatry? because then instead of ONE GOD, we must worship THREE? Answer: Tho' we adore Three, They are all but One GOD. Nor is this the Language of Men only, and of the best of Men, the true Church; but of GOD

GOD Himself. (h) *There are Three that bear* ^{(h) 1 S.}
record in Heaven, the FATHER, the SON, ^{Joh. 5. 7.}
and the HOLY GHOST; and these Three are
 ONE. The Divine Nature or Essence being
 diversify'd mysteriously into three, is still but
 one Substance, which remains an essential
 Unit.

Justly also may we retort upon the Socini-
 ans, that whereas they charge *us* with *Idolatry*
here, they themselves are more guilty of it. For
 they give divine worship to CHRIST, who
 according to *them* is but a *Man*. Indeed to
 justify their Practice they pretend a Scripture
 Command for it, *Heb. 1. 6. Let all the Angels*
of GOD worship Him. But then that Mandate
 is certainly founded upon His *natural* DIVI-
 NITY, which had antecedent and eternal
 Right to Adoration. For He Himself openly
 declar'd, *that all Men should Honour the SON,*
even as they Honour the FATHER, S. Joh. 5. 23.
 And how can they possibly go higher? tho'
 for honouring Him to that degree they have
 greatest reason. For where there's the relati-
 on of *Father* and *Son* in *strictness* and proprie-
 ty, *both*, by being of the same *Nature* must be
equal, and so intitled to the same *Honour*. And
 that GOD is strictly and properly the Father
 of CHRIST, and so that CHRIST is *adorable*
 by *Nature* as well as *He*, is evident; because
 He notify'd it to the *Jews*. And therefore
 when he call'd GOD His FATHER, for do-
 ing that they presently charg'd Him with ma-
 king Himself *equal* with GOD; and would

D

have

have put Him to death for his presum'd (but mistaken) Blasphemy, as we find in that Chapter : For every Blasphemer, according to the judicial Process of the *Sanhedrim*, was to be ston'd to Death ; which was ground'd on that Divine Statute in *Levit. 24. 16*. Yet well may *they* and *we* both conclude Him *equal with GOD*, when He did not only call Him FATHER, *vers. 18* ; but Πατήρ ἰδίου, His *own proper FATHER*. And that was it which so much offended the *Jews*, His calling GOD His *peculiar* Father ; tho' in a lower or more lax sense, their whole *Nation* might have call'd Him *Father*, He having long before own'd *Israel* for His Son, and for His First-born, *Exod. 4. 22*.

And if CHRIST be truly the SON of GOD, and so to be honour'd of all Men as the FATHER is ; how ready soever *Socinians* are to charge us with *Idolatry* for honouring Him ; they have neither reason nor colour for it. But then on the contrary, we have *this Objection* to make against *them*, and that most justly : *How shall they be acquitted from the SAME CRIME, in worshipping CHRIST, when they do not allow Him to be GOD ?* S Paul flatly charges poor Heathens with that Sin, for *doing service to them which by Nature, or in reality, are no GODS, Gal. 4. 8* ; tho' they might verily take them for true DEITIES : which is more than these Men *think* of our SAVIOUR, or will *allow* Him to be ; and yet they *adore* Him. How can they answer and take off this ?

As

As to their pretended Plea, of having GOD's exprefs *Precept* for doing it; that can't excuse them. For the truth is that *Commandment*, *that very Command*, I say, which GOD gave Angels to worship CHRIST, and from which these Men would argue He's but a *Man*: is rather a clear and manifest proof that He is GOD. And may thus be made out.

When the Angel *Gabriel* was sent to annunciate His miraculous Conception to that Virgin who was to be His Blessed Mother; He gave Her to understand several things. As that by the HOLY GHOST's coming upon Her, and by the Power of the HIGHEST overshadowing Her, She should conceive and bring forth a Son: and that he should be nam'd JESUS, and be a great Prince, and be called the Son of GOD. Now tho' this imported He should be very Great, and a most extraordinary Person; yet it did not clearly discover His DIVINITY, but left that in the Dark. So that when at His *Creation*, or at His *Nativity*, GOD did bring Him into the World, *Heb. i. 6*; Angels might be as shy and fearful of worshipping Him as they were of committing Idolatry, because they knew Him not. For as the *Virginity* of Mary, and what She brought forth, and likewise the Death of the LORD, were hid from the Prince of this World; according to S. *Ignatius*: so, much more was his *Divine Nature*: And indeed when at His *Nativity* the *Oracles* were silenc'd in good

Ἐλαβεν ὁ
ἄγγελος τὸ
Ἀιῶνος τῆ-
τος ἡ παρ-
θενία Μαρ-
ίας, ἃ ὁ το
καρπὸς αὐ-
τοῦ, ὁμοί-
ως καὶ ὁ θά-
νατος τοῦ
Κυρίου. Ερ-
μ. ad E. h.

measure, and that famous one at *Delphos* in *Apollo's* Temple, after many Sacrifices, and earnest Intreaties, could give the Emperor no better answer than this;

Πᾶσι Ἐβραῖος κέλεται με Θεοῖς μακαρίων ἀνίστασθαι
 Τόν δὲ δέμας προλιπεῖν, &c. *An Hebrew Child that over-rules the blessed Gods, commands me to relinquish my Habitation :*

Such a force upon the Infernal Powers as compell'd them to return so disparaging an Answer to their High *Devoto*; shews the Holy JESUS had then put them under mighty restraint; and that must needs give them great cause to *suspect* that He was *more* than *Man*. And therefore when the LORD entred on His Sacred Ministry, as Satan tempted Him most furiously, and hurry'd Him (by permission) thro' the Air from place to place, to make his Temptations more violent and daunting; so at the same time He mistrusted He was the SON of GOD, as the words wherewith He began his two first Assaults, do plainly indicate: *if thou be the SON of GOD*. Nay, in all probability His *very Tempting* Him as he did, was to find out that truth which He vehemently dreaded, and yet was much concern'd to understand. For He knew very well that if he was really GOD's eternal SON, He would surely destroy both Him and his Kingdom. Tho' had he been thoroughly convinc'd of His Divinity, He neither could, nor would have Tempted Him at all. For
 then

then He must have stood in strange Awe of His MAJESTY, and also have known that His fiercest Temptations must have been vain. *Ignatius* therefore seems to be in the right; that CHRIST who was born of the Virgin *Mary*, was *hid from the Prince of this World*, especially as to His *Divine Nature*.

But then I must note, that it was hid from others too, and as it was conceal'd from *evil*, so it was unknown to *Good Angels* also. Yet by reason of *that Nature*, Divine Worship being due to Him, GOD might well command them to pay Him it. And then as they could do no less than obey, so that very *Precept* must throughly convince *them*, and should do *us*, that He is really GOD: for *Adoration* commanded by GOD to be given to any Being, effectually demonstrates it to be a DEITY. Where *do* we, or when *shall* we find that GOD ever injoin'd His Creatures to worship any meaner Object?

Nor need He have *requir'd* this of Angels, but that it was necessary to *inform* their *Judgment*, as well as to *direct* their *Duty*; they *not knowing* that CHRIST was GOD, by Hypostatick Union of His Humanity to the Eternal SON. And that they were ignorant here is plain and certain: for as they wanted Understanding in the Christian Mysteries (of which our LORD's *Incarnation* was a *chief* one) so they were to gain it by the Doctrines and Instructions of inspir'd Teachers; as is hinted in 1 S. Peter 1. 12: and in Eph. 3. 10.

Where we are told of Gospel Dispensations, that as they are *things which Angels desire to look into*; so they are to be *made known to the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places*, **BY THE CHURCH.**

And let me note by the way, that the Knowledge of CHRIST's DEITY comes to Men also by Revelation. So we learn, S. Mat. 16. 17. For when our LORD ask'd His Disciples, *Whom do Men say that I, the Son of Man, am?* They said, *some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.* Then demanding of them again, *But whom say YE that I am?* Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art CHRIST the SON of the Living GOD.* Where he set *the Son of GOD* (as to signification) in direct Antithesis, or Contradistinction to *the SON of Man*; so notifying that He was *Both*. Now mark how our SAVIOUR reply'd to Him: *Blessed art thou, Simon, for Flesh and Blood hath not REVEALED it unto thee, but my FATHER who is in Heaven.* A most undeniable Proof of CHRIST's DIVINITY. For when the FATHER revealed to Peter, that CHRIST was His SON, He could mean no otherwise than that He was *His own proper and eternal SON*. For GOD's SON He could be but *two ways*; either *by being a good Man*, or else *in way of Eternal Generation*. That He was so the *first way* only, can't possibly be meant here. For his being a good Man was sufficiently acknowledg'd by those who answer'd His
first

first Question, and own'd He was *John the Baptist*, or *one of the Praphets*. And had He been GOD's SON no farther, His enquiry in course must have ceased there, as being indeed compleatly answer'd. But after *that* Question whereby He interrogated about the Sentiments of *others*; He put *another* to His *Apostles*, to hear what *they* thought of Him. To which S. Peter returning a fuller and higher Answer (which CHRIST expected, and enquired for) that He was *the SON of the Living GOD*: for this our LORD pronounc'd Him *blessed*; and declar'd that *Flesh and Blood did not reveal it to Him, but His FATHER in Heaven*. Now had CHRIST been the SON of GOD *but as a good Man*, the Knowledge of *that* could not have *made Peter blessed*; tho' understanding Him to be so in *the highest sense*, might be very conducive to His Beatitude. And then He might have known CHRIST to be a good Man too, *without Revelation*. For S. Peter conversing with our LORD daily, and observing His strict and holy Life; His Carriage demonstrated His perfect Righteousness. And His purest Innocence and Integrity might easily be discover'd even by *Flesh and Blood*, or by Humane Reason and Apprehension. And so GOD's *revealing* it to the Apostle, would have been as vain and superfluous, as taking great pains to teach Him what he well knew already. So that to avoid running up-on these Rocks of Absurdity, we must confess that CHRIST is the true, and only, and eter-

nally begotten SON of the FATHER. And then well might He order His Angels to *worship Him*; whereas were He but a *Creature* as some would make Him, He would neither *command*, nor yet *permit* Divine Worship to be given Him, were He never so perfect and incomparable.

And indeed He declares no less by His Prophet, where He says, *My Glory I will not give to another*, *Isai. 42. 8*: that is, to no other Being whatever which is not a real DEITY. And great reason there is for GOD's resolving upon this, and thus proclaiming it. For His *Glory* is either

Essential.

Or Declarative.

The *first* is *His natural divine Perfection*; which is incommunicable to any Creature. And as He cannot impart it to *any other*, so neither can it be separated from *Himself*, without destroying His own Being. And *that* can't be done neither, because it *necessarily exists*.

The *second* is *Divine Worship*; proper to Him as He is divinely Perfect. And so for Him to transfer it to another, implies *him* to be as *Perfect* as *Himself*. Else that Being can have no aptitude or capacity for Divine Worship, any more than it has natural *Right* to it, or *Power* to reward it; of both which it is utterly destitute. Yet I must add, thus *perfect* it cannot be unless GOD *makes* it so; and that he can never do neither, because His *very making* it (could it otherwise be as perfect

fect as He) produces it *in time*; and so bars it from the Perfection of *Eternity à parte ante*. That Adoration therefore should be GOD's peculiar Due, and that He should allow it to none else; is most probable, as well as most reasonable. For as Divine Worship is an Act of the Highest Nature, so it is of such transcendent Quality as to suit only the sublimest Being: even that MAJESTY which is Self-existent, Independent, and most *absolutely* because *infinitely* Perfect.

And therefore as GOD declares He *will not*, so I may say, He *cannot* allow Divine Worship to any but Himself, He being the sole *adequate*, and so the only *lawful* Object of it. And should He direct it to be done to the most exalted Creature He could make, yet when that Creature (as a Creature) must be infinitely short of *Himself*; for that reason it seems to be as unworthy of *His Worship*: and then for GOD to order that Worship to be given it, would it not be a prodigious Incongruity, and as *absurd* as it would be *unsuitable*?

To make this the more evident, we may bring the case home to *our selves*. And truly for us to worship any Creature, which is so far from being the Cause or Prop of *our* Beings, that 'tis always dependent, and so precarious as to its *own*; and unable to support it one Minute: how improper and extravagant would it be? Even as extravagant and nonsensical, as it would be for us to reason with Brutes, or argue with Plants, or to make
Speeches

Speeches and Compliments to Stocks or Stones; *they* being as capable of such *Treatments* from us, as any *Creature* can be of *Religious Addresses*. That GOD therefore should lay such a Task upon us, seems impossible: it would be so very unagreeable and wrong, and so much against the Reason and Nature of Things; that we may well think His Infinite Wisdom is averse from, and irreconcilable to it.

In short, Divine Worship is so very far above *every* Creature, that it can be congruous to *none*; nor can any in point of *Reason* expect, or in point of *Religion* accept it. And upon the same account of its exalted Sublimity, it is so very well suited to GOD, that He appropriates it to Himself; and will neither permit nor pass it to another, as being His own indefeasible Right, as sole Creator, and supreme Governour of all. For those high Powers and Perfections in *Him*, being the Fountain or Spring of signal Favours and Benefactions to *us*, even of our *Beings*, and their *continuance*; they are the true Basis of that Divine Honour which He claims, and we yield. And where in Holy Worship we go not upon these Grounds, we build, as it were, without Foundation; and then as what we do is egregiously foolish, so whither tends it but to ruine?

And that GOD cannot *approve* of our worshipping any Creature, much less *recommend* it to, or *lay* it upon us; is apparent from hence: that *He cannot endure our Adoration*
should

should so much as pass to Him by the Mediation or Use of a Creature. I mean, by our adoring the Creature, with *intention* our Worship should reach to His MAJESTY, and stop there. This is clear from *Israel's* worshipping the Golden Calf made by *Aaron*. The design of worshipping that Image, was but to worship GOD *by*, or *thro'* it. And to ascertain as much to the People, the Sacrifice and Solemnity then in hand, was notify'd by Proclamation made by the order of that High-Priest; to be a *Feast unto the LORD*, *Exod. 32. 5.* It was to commemorate His Mercy of delivering them out of Servitude: *These be thy GODS, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt.* Or as in *Nehem. 9. 18.* *This is thy GOD which brought thee up out of Egypt.* Whence it is plain, the Worship then done was directed chiefly to the true GOD. But because it passed to Him *by* or *thro'* an Image, and so a Creature was made His Rival in that piece of Worship; this so *inrag'd* as well as *offended* Him, that had *Moses* let Him alone His Anger had destroy'd them by a fearful consumption, *Exod. 32. 10.* Enough to convince us, that worshipping any thing *besides* GOD, tho' at the same time we worship Him too *by* or *with* it, is so *evil* in itself, as to be intolerably *odious* to His MAJESTY, and so *fatal* to us.

Those Christians therefore that use *Images* in their Devotions, and think thereby to raise, and quicken, and invigorate their Worship, and so make it the more acceptable (which
might

might be *Aaron's* drift) should do well to consider this: that *Israel's* worshipping GOD by the Golden Calf was very detestable and provoking.

Tho', by the way, 'tis somewhat strange, * *Dr. More.* that a Learned * Writer who owns that *Cherub* signifies a *Calf*, should maintain that the Image made by *Aaron*, was the Figure of an *Angel*; considering 'the Charge against the Idolaters *in Horeb, Psal. 106. 19, 20.* Namely, that the molten Image they worshipt there, was the *Similitude of an Ox that eateth Grass.* And so *Cherub* there could no more denote an *Angel*, than an *Angel* can feed upon *Grass.*

Now when GOD can't suffer a Creature to *share the least* with Him in His Worship; when He can't endure that in coming to Him, it should but *glide* by, or *glance* upon a Creature: how could He command (as *Socinians* say He has done) even all *Angels* as well as *Men*, to give Divine Worship to *One*, tho' never so advanc'd?

Once a Creature proud enough to expect this Worship, laid claim to it, tho' without Title: but what said our LORD to him for his impudent Motion? *It is written* (as a standing *Rule*, or unchangeable *Law* of Adoration never to be cancell'd or departed from) *Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve, S. Mat. 4. 10.* And after these words came out of CHRIST's Mouth, could He ever have suffer'd any to worship Him, had he not been GOD?

To

To go a little farther. That GOD cannot allow, much less appoint Divine Worship to be given to a *Creature*; may be concluded from the *first Commandment* in the Decalogue. As He elsewhere declares Himself to be *the only true GOD*, and that *there is none like Him*, and *none besides Him*: so here He requires all His People to own *Himself alone*, or *none but Him* for GOD. *Thou shalt have no other GODS before me*. And this being the first Precept of the Moral Law, it is of perpetual Obligation. Now when GOD hath thus ty'd us to acknowledge no other DEITY but *Himself*, and the chief way of *owning Him* is *Divine Worship*; can He, after that, not only yield we should worship a *Creature* as we do *Him*, but *injoin* us to do it? Then surely this must plunge us extreamly, if not make us ready to question if there be such a thing as *certain and immutable reveal'd Truth*. For here we find natural, necessary Duty belonging properly to GOD, and bound upon our Consciences by a moral indissoluble Ligament; not only revok'd, and taken off again, but flatly contradicted. For long since *that Engagement* (thought indispensable) was laid upon us; we are not only *licenc'd* to worship CHRIST, who (in the Judgment of many) is no GOD, as we do GOD Himself: but are under an absolute necessity of doing it, by virtue of divine *Command*. Or say, this does not void the first WORD in the Decalogue, yet must it not clash rudely, and strangely interfere

terfere with it to our great Disturbance?

And which is more yet; we are taught to believe, that *GOD tempteth no Man*, S. *Ja.* 1. 13. He does not the least, that is, which may invite, or entice, or betray any into Evil. But can that be true, if *this* be so which I am now confuting, that *GOD commands us to worship a Creature*? Especially when He suffers us to *execute* the Precept. *That* I put in, because *GOD* may sometimes for *our Trial*, command us to do, what He will not permit actually to be done. Thus, He tempted *Abraham*, when He commanded him to offer up his Son: which yet He did not let him do, lest he should have broke the *Sixth* Commandment. And for the same reason *GOD* cannot command us to worship *CHRIST*, if but a *Creature*; because in the first Commandment He hath forbidden it as a moral Evil: and so in requiring us to *obey one* of His Precepts, He must have tempted us to *violate another* moral one.

And then besides thus *Tempting US*; at what a rate must *GOD tempt HIM*, whom He set up for the *Object* of this high and general Adoration? For when the same Honour is paid to *Him* by Angels, and Men, that they pay to *GOD*; how forcibly must this incline, if not constrain Him to think that He really is *GOD*, according as their Worship implies Him to be?

The *Sin* whereby *Angels* became *Devils*, is by the Learned thought to be *Pride*. And by

by that they were so extravagantly pufft up, that they either thought themselves *equal* to GOD, or *aspir'd* to be so. And They finding this Temptation so powerful and pernicious to *themselves*, They assaulted *Man* with the same, hoping it would prevail; *ye shall be as GODS*, Gen. 3. 5. And what they presum'd was soon accomplisht, for it prov'd as fatal as they could wish. Now when Blessed Angels, and Emparadis'd Man could not withstand this mighty Suggestion, but were drawn into Sin by the bewitching Phanſie of *being like to GOD*: what so potent Temptation can there be to induce one to conclude He is GOD indeed, than to be constantly and universally worshipt as such, by all the Flower of the Creation!

Should any surmise or offer to suggest, that CHRIST is of so exalted a Pitch, or refin'd a Temper, that no such Temptation *can fasten* on Him: I might then demand. Is He so High as to be GOD? then I have gain'd my Point. In case He be not, we know no higher Creatures in the World than *Angels* and *Men*: and both those Orders have been baffl'd already, and probably undone by this very Temptation.

And then, which is considerable, The *Temptation* CHRIST feels, must be *much stronger* than ever *any* were; for He must be honour'd continually by the whole religious intellectual World with the same Worship that GOD is. So that grant He is but a *Man*, and be His Spirit

Spirit and Temper never so rais'd and excellent; Divine Worship would not only be a Temptation *equal* to *Him* and His *Excellencies*, but *higher* than *both*. As much higher in proportion to His most elevated Perfections, as ever the Temptations whereby Angels, or Man fell, could be superior to Theirs. And so even CHRIST Himself tho' never so exalted and glorify'd, might yet be over-power'd. And then for GOD to command a Man (set as high as His Nature can possibly be lifted up) to be worship'd like Himself; would be next to clapping the strongest Bias upon His Will it is capable of, to draw Him into Rebellion against His MAJESTY. Nay, and the *very raising* of a meer Man to such an excessive degree of Sublimity, would mightily inforce the Temptation pointed at, by adding to the Fury, and so to the Danger of it; and making Him the more easie to be overcome. He that is honour'd as much as the King by all Subjects, may be drawn to think He is of equal Dignity. But when GOD tempteth no Man at any time, He can never tempt any Man in such a way, and at such a rate.

Once again; *I, saith the LORD, change not, Mal. 3. 6.* And this is as true of His *Moral Law*, and His *Word*; as it is of His *Nature*, and His *Attributes*. And if it were not, GOD would not only resemble the Sun in His *Tropical Turns* and *Traverses*; which Variations He now disclaims, *S. Ja. 1. 17*: but His most fixt Dispensations would be as mutable as the Moon's

Moon's Phases ; and She that is a noted Emblem of *Change*, would be too much an *Image* of the DEITY. But with the ALMIGHTY it is quite otherwise ; and He having made it a *Law*, *Thou shalt have no other GODS before me* : and having said it in His *Word*, that the LORD GOD only shall be worshipt : His commanding Divine Worship to be given to CHRIST, plainly shews that He is GOD. And then Socinians have little cause to charge us with *Idolatry* for *Adoring* Him, when not to do it, would be great *Impiety*, and the *Idolatry* must lie on *their* part.

But to close up this Particular ; they that seem so to abhor *Idols*, should be very cautious of committing *Sacrilege*. Yet as black an Offence as that is, by Socinians it is heinously perpetrated. For by offering to make the GOD-HEAD consist of *one* PERSON, they Sacrilegiously attempt to rob it of *two*. And therefore when *Praxeas*, a chief *Patropassian*, would make the FATHER and the SON to be one and the same ; he did it, as *Tertullian* says, *Cum Prophana & Sacrilega temeritate, with Prophane and Sacrilegious Rashness. De Præscript. Heret. Cap. 53.*

8ly, Do they plead that the Doctrine of a TRINITY is matter of Scandal, or occasion of great offence to the Jews ? So, reply, is that of a Crucify'd JESUS ; but shall Christians therefore quit their Faith in Him ? No more must we reject the belief of a TRINITY upon *their* account ; for that would be to turn

(i) *Judaice fidei ista res sic* anum Deum credere ut Filium adnumerari nolis, & post Filium Spiritum Sanctum. Quid erit inter nos & illos, nisi differentia ista? Quod opus Evangelii? Quæ est Substantia Novi Testamenti statuens Legem & Prophetas usq; ad *Johannem*, si non exinde PATER, FILIUS, & SPIRITUS TRES crediti unum Deum fiunt? Sic Deus novaret Sacramentum ut novè Unus crederetur, per FILIUM & SPIRITUM; ut coram jam DEUS in suis propriis nominibus & PERSONIS cognosceretur qui retro per FILIUM, & SPIRITUM pradicatus, non intelligebatur. Adver. Prax. Cap. ult.

Jews in part, as (i) *Tertulian* notes. His words containing an emphatical, as well as an ancient Testimony of a TRINITY in UNITY, it will not be improper to recite them. *To believe that GOD is so one as not to reckon the SON with Him, and after the SON the SPIRIT, is a piece of Jewish Faith. For what shall there be between us and them but that difference? What is the Work of the Gospel? What the Substance of the New Testament, declaring the Law and the Prophets were*

till John; if from thence the FATHER, the SON, and the SPIRIT, believed to be Three, make Not one GOD? So would GOD renew the Mystery, as that He might anew be believed to be One, by the SON, and the SPIRIT; and that He might now be known openly to be GOD in his proper NAMES and PERSONS; who before was preached by the SON, and the SPIRIT, but was not understood. An irrefragable Proof that the Sentiments of the Primitive Doctors touching the TRINITY, were the same with ours. For as this Father asserts the One GOD to be Three; so he teaches plainly that they Three were not Three Names, but Three PERSONS expressly, or three Hypostases.

And

And tho' to deny a TRINITY (as he observes) is to *Judaize*; the generality of that People being strangers to this Mystery: yet the Wiser of them were acquainted with it. For in all probability they had it from *Moses*, else *Pythagoras* and *Plato* could not have had it from *them*. Yet from them they learnt it so distinctly, and taught it again so clearly to their Disciples; that some of them speak of *τρεῖς ἑνὸς ἐνς*: *Three subsisting out of One*. And the very word *Hypostases*, by which we speak the PERSONS in the TRINITY, some would have to be taken from *Platonick* Writers; and by the Church to be first apply'd to those Divine PERSONS in *Origen's* time, tho' in a sense different from that *Platonists* us'd it in.

And as unacquainted as the *Jews* now are with the Doctrine of a TRINITY, yet that they had a Tradition concerning it fairly corresponding to the Christian Notion of it, appears from that piece of Orthodox *Cabbalism* which they have amongst them. אֱלֹהִים בֶּן אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ חַקֵּדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים שְׁלֹשָׁה בְּאֶחָד אֶחָד בְּשִׁלְשָׁה The FATHER GOD, the SON GOD, the HOLY GHOST GOD; THREE in ONE, and ONE in THREE.

Again; Do they offer to wheedle any, by pretending that the Doctrine of a TRINITY will hinder the Propagation of true Religion; the firm belief of a TRIUNE GOD, being an invincible Difficulty to Infidels? They may silence them by answering, That the

Success of Christianity proves the contrary ; and that *Socinus* his Principles, by contradicting Scripture, are far more like to sink Religion even by subverting the Foundations of it. Or if Scripture and his Principles could consist (as they clash intolerably ;) they would yet so chill even *true* Religionists, as to make the fervent, lukewarm in it.

For whereas Scripture teacheth, that GOD
 (k) S. Joh. 3. 16. so loved us as to give *His only* (k) *begotten*
 (l) Rom. 9. 5. *SON for us*, who is (l) *GOD blessed for ever* :
 if this His SON should be at last but *ψιδος*
αληθινος, a *meer Man* (as *Socinus* makes
 Him) what a damp would this cast upon us ?
 and how must it needs check and cool us in
 our Affection, and devout Adorations ?

And we being farther taught in the Vo-
 lume of Truth, that this SON of GOD
 (m) Tit. 2. 14. (m) *gave Himself for us* : that He was incar-
 nate in our Flesh, and took the form of a
 Servant, and came to seek and save us when
 lost ; and of His own accord freely chose all
 Means, and us'd the best Methods subservi-
 ent to that End : if after all His seeming
 willingness and forwardness to express His
 Favour to us, He did no more *chuse* to be
 born for Men than one of us ; and after He
 was born, did what He did for us, as bound
 to it by the Laws of Heaven, and with no
 more Freeness of choice than we act Duties
 that we are oblig'd to, and which we can't
 refuse in point of Obedience, or omit with-

out Sin ; which according to *Socinus* must *all be* : what a curb again would this give us in our Religious Capacity ?

And the same holy Book informing us, that He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities ; that He died for our Sins, and shed His Blood to redeem us from the Practice and due Punishment of them : If finally it appears, that this was not at all to expiate our Guilt, or to redeem our Souls, or to satisfy GOD's Justice, or reconcile us to His MAJESTY ; but only to set us *an illustrious Example*, as *Socinians* contend : how would this discourage the most Religious, and even overset them ? For allow the *Nature* of our SAVIOUR first, and then His *Kindness*, and His *Merits* to be diminish'd and destroy'd (as they must be according to what's here represented :) and presently our Opinion of, Honour for, and Affection towards Him must abate.

Farther yet ; Do they inveigh against the Faith of a TRINITY as *destructive to Christian Love ? as causing Feuds and Animosities by Scholastick Disputes, and occasioning far worse Strifes and Concertations ?* Then wish them to consider, that we are bound in proper Ways, and lawful Measures to contend for the Faith deliver'd to the Saints. And which is more, we must contend earnestly for it, as S. Jude signifies. The word he uses is *ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι*, which lessons us to contend vigorously, and vehemently for it.

And

And agreeably the *Vulgar* Translation renders it, *supercertare*; which implies striving for it with *all our Might*, and even *beyond* our Strength, as it were, or *above* it. And if we must thus contend for the Faith in general, and for every Branch in the Body of it; then how much more for that of the TRINITY, a principal Article in the Christian's Creed? And tho' Contests about it ought to be manag'd with all Prudence, Meekness, and Moderation; yet for fear of Differences, or worst Consequences of them, we must by no means tamely betray so important a Truth; or renounce it for the sake even of *Peace* itself.

And then advise them to consider; that 'tis not the right Belief of a TRINITY, but Heterodox Opinions of the UNITY, which are, and have been pernicious to Mutual Love. In time of *Arianism*, how barbarously cruel were the Sticklers for it to such as were Orthodox? But their innocent Blood shed *then*, is *now* a Broad-Seal to the Truth of that Doctrine which they died for, and we believe. And they who own CHRIST for GOD, by acknowledging a TRINITY; and also that He became a Man, and in love to Men was crucify'd, and injoin'd them to love one another as He lov'd them: have far better *Reasons* for *Peace*, and *Motives* to *Charity*; than they that deny His Glorious DIVINITY.

Lastly,

Lastly, Do they except against that plain Text, *These Three are One*? Do they say it is no Canonical Scripture, as not being written by S. *John* at first; but afterwards interpolated by Maintainers of a TRINITY, against which they wanted such an Authority? This Objection may easily be taken off by a Threefold Answer.

1st, Tho' this piece of a Text be left out of some Copies, *it is yet in MOST, and in the BEST.* And where it chanc'd to be left out, that might easily happen thro' *inadvertency*, or *præterintentional Mistake* in (n) the Transcriber.

(n) See Dr. Hammond's Notes on the Place.

2^{ly}, Tho' this Text were spurious, and sily inserted; *yet by several others unquestionably genuine*, a TRINITY in UNITY may be very well prov'd to them that are ingenuous and unprejudic'd.

3^{ly}, *This Text could not be supposititious*, and thrust into the Canon by designing *Trinitarians* against the *Arians*; because it was there enter'd before *Arius's* Heresie sprung up. For when S. *Cyprian* (who died a Martyr before that infamous *Hæresarch* was known) treated of the *Unity of the Catholick Church*, in his Book which bears that Name: As he urg'd to Unity by proper Types and Figures, so he argu'd for it *from the Unity in the TRINITY.* And in pursuing the Argument, he did not only quote that passage in S. *John's* Gospel, *dicit Dominus, &c. The LORD saith, I and the* FA-

FATHER are **ONE**: but moreover cited this very Text out of S. *John's* first Epistle, adding immediately, & iterum de **PATRE, FILIO, & SPIRITU** Sancto scriptum est; & hi tres unum sunt. *And again it is written touching the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLT GHOST; AND THESE THREE ARE ONE.* A most clear Evidence (after all the Cavils of our Adversaries) that those Words were not foisted into the Canon against the *Arians* (as being there long before those Hereticks were taken notice of) but were originally recorded by the beloved Disciple; and so contain a Truth Authentick.

Indeed from the words immediately following, *viz. There are Three that bear witness in Earth, the SPIRIT, and the Water, and the Blood; and these three agree in one: Socinians* would infer, that the *Oneness* of the *Former Three*, and that of the *Latter Three*, are both *alike*; that is, an *Oneness* in *Testimony*. But then it being said of the former, *these Three ARE One*; and of the latter, *these three AGREE in one*: This makes as manifest a Difference between their *Onenesses*, as there is between an *Unity in Nature, or Substance*; and an *Unity in Concord, or Concurrence*.

But then that *Socinus's* Opinion must be erroneous is farther evident from hence. It is plainly said of our **LORD**, that *He came down from Heaven, S. Job. 3. 13.* And
when

when He declar'd *that*, he moreover affirm'd, that at the same time *He was in Heaven too*; tho' He was then actually on Earth. His words are expressly these; *He that came down from Heaven, even the SON of Man who is in Heaven.* Which forcibly imply that He had two *Natures* in one *Person*; and as in respect of His Humanity (which præexisted there) He came down from Heaven, and was then upon Earth: so in regard of His DIVINITY, He was in Heaven still as much as ever. A sure proof that *Socinus* errs, in that He impeaches CHRIST's Veracity here by denying Him to be GOD and Man, which this Assertion of His makes evident. Well therefore might a learned Writer say, *Out of this place the Distinction of two Natures in one Person is evidently gathered.*

Ex hoc loco evidenter colligitur distinctio duarum Naturarum in persona una.
Lighfo. t. Harmon.

Nor is *Socinus's* Doctrine false only, but *enthusiastick*, and he Himself brands it for such. In the Sixth of *S. John*, our REDEEMER asserts more than once, that *He came down from Heaven.* But how could He do that if he was but a Man, and had his beginning like other Men, by being born of a Woman? This so puzzl'd *Faustus Socinus*, that to solve the Difficulty he was fain to take an unwarrantable course. For he pretends that upon Fasting and Praying for information in the Case, GOD reveal'd to

F him

him that **CHRIST** was taken up into Heaven to be præ-instructed in His Prophetick Office, before He came down to execute it in the World. And thus *Socinianism* noted before to be stain'd with *Sacrilege* and *Superstition*; proves at last the Spawn of *Enthusiasm*: and so this wicked Opinion was born by help of the same Midwife, which assisted *Mahomet* in his monstrous Parturiency. Enough (with **GOD's** Grace and wise Consideration) to set us against it, and fix us for ever, in the firm belief of that Adorable **TRINITY**, into which we were Baptized. And memorable it is, that when Christians were Baptiz'd in the Primitive Church, they

(o) Nec semel, sed ter
ad singula Nomina in Per-
sonas singulas tingimur.
Tert. Cont. Prax. Cap. 26.

(o) thrice; at every Name, and
into every **PERSON** of the
GOD-HEAD. A most solemn

Acknowledgment, and emphatical Testimony of a **TRINITY**: even a **TRINITY** of **PERSONS**, or Living **SUBSISTENCES**.

And now in reference to the subject matter of this Letter, I may fitly conclude with that Passage in the Second Canon of the Council of *Carthage* (some Years before that of *Nice*.) For it fairly points out our Duty, and may help to antidote that Heretical Contagion which has infected many. Τὸς ΤΡΙΑΔΟΣ τὸτ' ἐστὶ τὸ Πατὴρ, καὶ τὸ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, τὴν μονοθεϊαν ἑ-

ἡμεῖς διαφορὰν γνωσκομένην, ἐν ταῖς ἡμετέροις,
 διανοίαις ἐγκαθιερωθεῖσαν κατέχου. Καθὼς ἐ-
 μάθουμεν, ἔτω τὰς λαοὺς διδάσκουμεν. *As to the*
UNITY of the TRINITY, that is, of the
FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HO-
LY GHOST, which is known to have no diffe-
rence, we keep it consecrated in our Minds.
As we have learned so will we teach the People
of GOD. A Practice and Resolution well be-
 coming all faithful Ministers of **CHRIST**,
 especially in this Juncture: and by all means
 let them be *Yours*, as with **GOD's** help they
 shall ever be *mine*.

I was just resolving to add here in way of
Postscript some *Quotations* out of the Ancient
 Writers (before the Council of *Nice*) to
 confirm the Doctrine of a **TRINITY** in U-
 nity: but accidentally reading Dr. *Ham-*
mond's Notes on 1 S. *Joh.* 5. 6; I there found
 so many and good Authorities cited to that
 purpose; that I need but referr you to them
 (and others that are intelligent) for compe-
 tent Satisfaction. And so I am

Yours, &c.

ERRATA.

P Ag. 9. line 25. after *more*, insert *and*. [p. 10. l. 14. dele *ἐν*]
 [after *Θεῶν*, insert *τῶν*] [read *μονογενῶν*.]

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